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84th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 24 April 2018, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Lajčák ..... (Slovakia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Saikal (Afghanistan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 65 (*continued*)

Peacebuilding and sustaining peace

High-level meeting of the General Assembly on peacebuilding and sustaining peace

Report of the Secretary-General (A/72/707)

Draft resolution (A/72/L.49)

The Acting President: Before we proceed, I would like to appeal to all speakers to keep their statements brief and concise in order to make maximum use of the limited time we have for this high-level meeting. To enable all on the list of speakers to be heard, statements in plenary meetings should be limited to three minutes when speaking in a national capacity and five minutes when speaking on behalf of a group.

As members will recall, in its resolution 71/323 ,of 8 September 2017, the General Assembly called for strict adherence by every speaker to the Assembly's time limits, particularly during high-level meetings. Participants with longer statements are encouraged to read a shorter version and to submit the full text to the Secretariat for posting on the PaperSmart portal. Also in accordance with resolution 71/323, the "all protocol observed" principle is recommended, whereby participants are encouraged to refrain from the listing of standard protocol expressions during their statements. Bearing in mind the time limit, I would like to appeal to speakers to deliver their statements at a reasonable pace so that interpretation into the six official United Nations languages may be provided properly. I appeal for all speakers' cooperation in observing the time limits so that all those inscribed can be heard in a timely manner.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Asaduzzaman Khan, Minister of Home Affairs of Bangladesh.

Mr. Khan (Bangladesh): I have the honour to represent our Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina, and to convey her greetings to all participants. I would like to thank the President for his dedicated work in organizing this high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. It is an endorsement of the Secretary-General's call for preventing conflicts and encouraging a surge in peace diplomacy.

Bangladesh's commitment to international peace and security is inspired by our nation's heroic struggle for independence. During our 1971 war of liberation, our people experienced the worst kinds of genocide and crimes against humanity. From the ashes of war, the father of our nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, embarked on rebuilding the country brick by brick. He committed us to acting in solidarity with oppressed peoples around the world. That explains why Bangladesh has opened its doors to more than 1 million of the Rohingya who have been forcibly displaced from Myanmar's Rakhine state. The massive influx of people is having a huge socioeconomic and environmental impact on Bangladesh. Despite those

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difficulties, our Prime Minister has reached out to that terribly persecuted group of people in a rare display of courage and empathy. She has voiced her confidence that if we can meet the needs of our own population of 161 million people, we can also share our resources with 1 million distressed residents of Myanmar. We thank the international community for recognizing her humane gesture by calling her a mother of humanity and a star of the East.

In her address to the General Assembly last year (see A/72/PV.14), our Prime Minister presented a five-point agenda to address that crisis. She emphasized the importance of ensuring that the report of the Kofi Annan Foundation's Advisory Commission on Rakhine State is implemented fully and unconditionally. Unless it is resolved, the Rohingya crisis could have a far-reaching impact on peace and security in our region and beyond.

Our Government maintains a zero-tolerance approach to terrorism in all forms and manifestations. We are determined not to allow our territory to be used against the interests of our neighbouring countries. We recognize the importance of engaging local communities to resist the forces of violent extremism and radicalization.

Bangladesh has emerged as a trusted partner in United Nations peace initiatives. Over the past three decades, we have adapted our capabilities and performance in response to the complex challenges in peacekeeping missions, including for the protection of civilians. Bangladesh has always spoken out firmly against sexual violence in armed conflict. We believe that United Nations peace operations must be accompanied by sound, determined political processes. Increased and predictable financing for United Nations peace operations must be ensured without diverting resources from development and humanitarian assistance.

We are convinced that there can be no peace without development, and no development without peace. Our Government therefore attaches the utmost importance to combating poverty, scaling up human development and promoting inclusive and sustainable growth. Drawing lessons from our achievements on the Millennium Development Goals, we have mainstreamed the Sustainable Development Goals into our national development strategies. The United Nations has duly recognized our efforts by declaring Bangladesh eligible for graduation from the least developed country category against all three benchmarks, a first among least developed countries. Yet the effects of climate change may be compromising security and development for many of our people.

The Secretary-General's broad vision for reform, as captured in his report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707), is a step in the right direction. In future, Bangladesh will continue to promote the sustaining peace agenda in parallel with our flagship initiative to build a culture of peace in human minds as a defence against wars and conflicts.

The Acting President: I now call give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration of Ghana.

Ms. Botchwey (Ghana): Ghana joins previous speakers in expressing special thanks to the President for convening this high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, a subject that has engaged the attention of the General Assembly and the Security Council in recent years and that emphasizes the centrality of prevention and a long-term view to peace and security. Our meeting is taking place at a time when the world is experiencing an unacceptably high number of violent conflicts, with their attendant human suffering and humanitarian crises. We are all witnesses to the many harrowing stories of the effects of such conflicts on populations, including death and destruction, the forced displacement of large numbers of people and destabilization across regions. My delegation therefore welcomes the normative and conceptual shift to a more proactive, cross-pillar and cross-sectoral approach and strategy for peace and security, as expressed in the related Security Council and General Assembly resolutions.

Sustaining peace reinforces the fact that peace, security, development and human rights are closely interlinked and mutually reinforcing. Ghana shares the view that efforts for peacebuilding and sustaining peace should interact and be anchored in well-targeted actions aimed at preventing conflicts' outbreak, escalation, continuation or recurrence. In addition, they should address the root causes of conflict, assist parties in ending hostilities and promote national reconciliation, as well as fostering and promoting recovery, reconstruction and development.

The focus on prevention is critical. Ghana firmly believes that a number of measures should be at the

core of our efforts, such as strengthening the rule of law at the international and national levels, establishing democracy and good governance, building accountable institutions, ensuring access to justice and respect for and the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Sustainable development, with a focus on poverty eradication, gender equality and social intervention, should be treated not as a secondary matter but rather as an integral part of building sustainable societies.

The scale and nature of the challenges of peacebuilding and sustainable peace call for close strategic and operational partnerships between the United Nations, national Governments and other key stakeholders, including international, regional and subregional organizations. The Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security, signed in 2017, is an excellent example of such cooperation. The African Union policy on post-conflict reconstruction and development and the African Solidarity Initiative are some of the positive measures that have been put in place to help build peace on our continent.

Similarly, the strategic partnership between the United Nations and the Economic Community of West African States has resulted in some of the most successful intervention efforts in the areas of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Ghana is committed to playing a key role in the regional and subregional efforts for peacebuilding and the peaceful settlement of disputes through various means, including preventive diplomacy and confidence-building and mediation efforts.

As a troop-contributing country with a track record of more than 40 years, Ghana is well aware of the role of peacekeeping operations in comprehensive strategies for peacebuilding and sustaining peace. We therefore urge that the peacebuilding components of United Nations peacekeeping operations and the special political and drawdown missions be adequately resourced, which will contribute to the stability and continuity of peacebuilding activities.

The role of women in peacebuilding and sustaining peace cannot be overemphasized. All Governments should support and enhance women's leadership and participation in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding. As the African Union's gender champion, Mr. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, President of the Republic of Ghana, has committed to working for the enhancement of women's representation at all decision-making levels in national and international institutions. Similarly, Ghana calls for conscious efforts by national Governments to seek ways to promote the inclusive participation of young people and the private sector in peacebuilding.

It is also important to emphasize the need for adequate, predictable and sustained financing, particularly for United Nations peacebuilding activities, including through increased contributions, as well as for strengthened partnerships with key stakeholders. Voluntary contributions to the Peacebuilding Fund both by Member States and non-traditional donors and other partners must also be actively encouraged. Ghana is deeply concerned about the fact that the total financial resources available to countries affected by violent conflict have dwindled in recent years, despite the fact that nearly half of their populations live in extreme poverty. For that reason, we welcome the work of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group in promoting cross-pillar coordination and coherence in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its link to peace.

Finally, Ghana wants to reiterate how important it is to foster a culture of peace in all Member States, which requires us all — individuals, nations and international organizations — to work together to promote an understanding of our common humanity. We must encourage intercultural respect and strengthen interreligious understanding. We must strive to overcome our differences, promote dialogue and resolve to put peace first. I want to take this opportunity to reaffirm Ghana's strong and abiding belief in the underlying principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and to urge support for the Secretary-General's proposed reforms of the Organization's peace and security pillar, as well as the requisite shifts in its management paradigm and the repositioning of its development pillar. The United Nations must be better equipped and made fit for purpose in order to deal with the multifaceted challenges and threats to peace and security in our world today.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Jesus Dureza, Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process of the Philippines.

Mr. Dureza (Philippines): I would first like to convey the warm greetings of the Filipino people under

our President, Mr. Rodrigo Roa Duterte. I have a long speech because it covers the work of a lifetime spent on peace work. I have therefore decided to abandon it and just highlight some of the narratives under way in our work for peace in the Philippines today.

First of all, the President is boldly trying to address big issues in our country — corruption, drugs and criminality. However, high on his agenda is how to deal with peace efforts in the Philippines today — and rightly so because, as Member States well know, as we speak today, we are doing a great deal of work towards addressing issues of peace and conflict in our country. As we speak, we are in the process of resuming our work in negotiating a just and sustainable peace with the Communist Party of the Philippines. I say "as we speak", because the President had previously cancelled the peace talks because at the time he felt that there was no environment conducive to the resumption of negotiations. Today, he believes that it is time for efforts to start to resume negotiations. We are also addressing our issues with the Muslim Bangsamoro people in our country, who live primarily in the southern part of the Philippines. We signed agreements earlier but the implementation was ineffective. We are now picking up the pieces again and Congress is working to enact a law to entrench the signed agreements. That work is under way.

However, there are certain things with which we align ourselves. As we have heard other speakers say today, we support the concept of peace and development as a nexus for bringing about sustainable peace. As we well know, there can be no sustained peace without development, and development cannot be sustained without peace. Here I always come back to the dilemma of the chicken and the egg and which comes first. Should it be the chicken or the egg? Some say that it is the egg, while others say that the egg comes from the chicken. The whole issue of peace and development is at the crux of that narrative of the chicken and the egg and of which should come first. Under President Duterte's peace and development road map, they must go hand in hand and at the same time, not one after the other.

In working for development, we must also look through the peace lens. We cannot undertake projects that are also triggers of conflict. That is why it is very important that there be inclusivity in our work towards peace. We know the language of the World Bank concerning so-called moral hazards. We cannot address sustainable peace by giving attention only to the people who are triggers of conflict or who are involved in conflict, because the rest of the people, the majority, will ask why care is being taken of those who are fighting the Government when they, who are peaceful citizens, are left out. Should they also take up arms in order to get the attention of the Government? That is something that is very important in our work for peace.

We have also organized so-called peace tables. In our negotiations with rebels across the table we always tell them that we are negotiating with them but that they are the smaller table, because there is a bigger table outside, which is the public itself. If we address the concerns only of the smaller table, it will be difficult to implement agreements, as we have seen in our country very recently. We must therefore address the bigger table, which is the general public. For example, we have had the experience of seeing the failed enactment of a law to implement and entrench the peace agreement signed with the Bangsamoro. That happened because the public did not buy into the agreement, so the plebiscite — the members of Congress — did not approve it. We are therefore now addressing the bigger table alongside the smaller table.

We must also recognize something very basic about unity and diversity. The Philippines is a very diverse country. We have Muslims, Christians and indigenous peoples. They have their own identities and their own ways of doing things. We do not want to mainstream them into one body, one culture and one practice. We must accept and understand that we are different because it is unity in diversity that can bring about a sustainable peace. We should remember that the signing of a peace agreement is not the end of the process. In fact, signing them presents more challenges as we work to implement them on the ground. That is the reason why we are still in the process of working to fully implement the 1996 peace agreement with one Moro group. Agreements are only an initial step — indeed, they present challenges. It is our ability to meet those challenges that will bring us closer to sustainable peace.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank the World Bank, the United Nations and the foreign nations that have kept their faith in our work for peace. Many of the peace mechanisms that are now in place in the Philippines today are strongly supported by the United Nations system and its agencies. However, besides the financial support, I would like to mention the importance of the presence of the mediators who

facilitate our peace meetings, because we have noticed that during challenging times in the negotiation process, it is not easy for rebel groups to walk away from the table when foreign nations are supporting that peace process. We see our foreign partners as umbilical cords that will keep us together.

We are now dealing with the great challenge of violent extremism not only to the Philippines but to the whole world, as Member States well know. In a recent incident, violent extremism reared its ugly head in a place called Marawi in the southern Philippines. There are many lessons to be learned from that, and we are still dealing with it. We are trying to rebuild following the conflict and the destruction that resulted from it. However, as we know from our experience — and I think that every country shares that — it is very easy to reconstruct buildings and structures but very difficult to restore the structure of social cohesion. The concept of social healing is very important. In that light, we thank the United Nations for bringing about a new paradigm shift that focuses not just on post-conflict rebuilding but now also in investing in preventing the outbreak of conflict altogether. That is why we are grateful, because we in the Philippines have experienced that problem, and we know that addressing it early on, without waiting for incidents of unrest to occur, is more meaningful and valuable in our work for peace.

Working for peace does not happen overnight. I call it peace by piece, one step at a time. This morning, I listened to the President of Colombia when he said that it is a question of laying it down, brick by brick (see A/72/PV.83). It is not a structure that can be built overnight and that we can see immediately, but every year, every country and every Administration must work on every brick. Sometimes one brick may be torn down and broken, but we must just repair it and put it back on our way to our final destination. The work for peace is not an easy road to travel. There are roadblocks. However, there are many ways to peace. We can avoid the roadblocks but we have to stay the course. We would therefore like to thank our foreign partners in our work. The challenge in the Philippines is still ongoing. We hope that we will continue to receive support and cooperation, in particular from the United Nations.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Jacek Czaputowicz, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Poland.

Mr. Czaputowicz (Poland): Let me begin by thanking Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, President of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session, for convening this valuable meeting. I would also like to thank this morning's speakers for their thorough and often moving statements. The young generation and women play a crucial role in the process of peacebuilding and sustaining peace. We know that children, the most vulnerable members of communities, are still affected by war and conflict in many regions. I agree with today's speakers that development is a key factor in building a safe and prosperous world.

Poland aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier on behalf of the European Union (see A/72/PV.83).

In the current state of affairs across the globe, preventing conflict and building sustainable peace are difficult tasks for all members of the international community. Unfortunately, internal conflicts, asymmetric attacks and violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law are our daily challenges. In order to tackle them, we need not only a wide spectrum of activities but also committed actors, including the United Nations, its Member States, regional organizations and civil society. Moreover, our peacebuilding and sustaining peace activities must encompass all three United Nations pillars — peace and security, development and human rights.

In my opinion, most of what the United Nations does locally and regionally boils down to building and sustaining peace. I would like to touch on a few of those activities in the broader context of the ongoing reform of the United Nations. I will turn first to the peace and security pillar. The challenge, scope and nature of current conflicts pose a significant challenge to the universal commitment, grounded in the Charter of the United Nations, to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. Violent local conflicts and wars often cross national borders and become regional and international issues. International and internal security are interlinked, and effective conflict-prevention activities at the international level can therefore also improve security at a national level.

Poland attaches particular importance to preventive diplomacy and the role of the United Nations in that area. We strongly support the vision and efforts of Secretary-General António Guterres to mainstream conflict prevention and sustaining peace as United

Nations priorities. We support reforms designed to strengthen the Secretariat's preventive capabilities, as we believe that it has an important role to play in that regard as well. We are also in favour of transforming the Peacebuilding Support Office into a new department of political and peacebuilding efforts. However, we should bear in mind that the primary responsibility for preventive action lies with States. In that context, we would like to underline the importance of effective national conflict-prevention policies, which include activities such as strengthening transparent and accountable State institutions, fighting corruption and promoting good governance.

Peacekeeping has proved to be an effective tool for the United Nations in assisting countries on the path from conflict to peace. In order to make peace sustainable, we should strive to use all instruments available in a coherent way. The successfully completed peacekeeping operations in Liberia last month and in Côte d'Ivoire last year are good examples of such activities. It will be extremely important to continue to use peacebuilding tools, such as financial grants and capacity-building through the Peacebuilding Fund and the United Nations Development Programme, for example, in order to reinforce stability and prosperity in those two countries.

With regard to the second pillar, development, its overarching aim is to improve the lives and future prospects of everyone, everywhere. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is now entering its third year of implementation. It helps to create the conditions for inclusive and sustainable development, which in turn prevents further crisis and conflict. In the ongoing discussion about repositioning the United Nations development system with a view to ensuring dignity, prosperity and peace, prevention and sustaining peace must be at the centre of international efforts. The main objective is to properly equip the United Nations to mitigate and end conflicts, address the effects of climate change and reduce their threats to the well-being of people and societies. Poland stands firmly behind such efforts, as we fully agree that sustainable and inclusive development is both a goal in its own right and the world's most productive way to build and sustain peace.

Let me now move onto the third pillar, human rights. There can be no successful peace process without full respect for human rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights continues to serve Governments, international organizations, civil society and individuals as a reference point in formulating and implementing human rights treaties, domestic legislation and policies. As a critical milestone in the area of human rights, the Declaration is as relevant today as it was 70 years ago. History proves that whenever universal values enshrined in the Declaration are violated, we run a higher risk of violence and conflict. Only equality, justice and freedom can prevent violent extremism and enable sustainable peace.

Secretary-General António Guterres rightly pointed out in his report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707) that the political will to sustain peace remains crucial. Poland fully supports that statement. I am here today to express the political will of my country to engage actively in the peacebuilding and sustaining peace efforts of the Secretary-General himself and the international community as a whole.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Mrs. Margaret Kobia, Cabinet Secretary of the Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs of Kenya.

Mrs. Kobia (Kenya): I would like to commend the President of the General Assembly for convening today's important high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. I also join other speakers in thanking the Secretary-General for his comprehensive remarks and commitment to peace and sustaining peace as an important tool in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Kenya aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/72/PV.83), and with that to be delivered by the representative of Mexico on behalf of the Group of Friends of Sustaining Peace. As a member of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), Kenya also aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the Chair of the PBC.

I would like to affirm Kenya's commitment to promoting universal peace and fostering better relations with our neighbours, Africa and the world. We seek to promote peace and stability in our region as a necessary condition for development and prosperity in all countries, including our own. We believe that to succeed in our goal of sustaining peace, we must prioritize our responses, particularly with regard to prevention.

We welcome the draft resolution (A/72/L.49) to be adopted during this high-level meeting as an indication that the Member States want to continue to move the agenda forward and make progress in the areas of peacekeeping, sustainable development and peace, both within the United Nations system and at the country level, with a focus on implementation. We note that, in keeping with the principles of the twin 2016 resolutions — resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016) — the Secretary-General's report (A/72/707) recognizes the primary role of Member States as key actors in the sustaining peace process. But the resolutions and the report clearly underscore that sustaining peace requires adequate, predictable financing. It is therefore important to use all avenues, including the convening and resource-mobilization platform of the PBC, to further consider the proposed financial options and the implications of service delivery on the ground. My delegation believes that if the ongoing reforms of the United Nations are to be truly preventive and focused on sustaining peace, it will be crucial to ensure that all these recommendations, along with the actionable proposals of the three 2015 reviews of the peacebuilding architecture, are integrated and implemented within the continuum of peace operations.

I would now like to highlight three areas where our Government is building and sustaining peace in practice through our national activities pertaining to young people, women and peace operations. Since my delegation gave a detailed statement on youth, peace and security during Monday's open debate in the Security Council (see S/PV.8241), today I would just like to reiterate that article 55 of Kenya's Constitution outlines a framework for investing in young people. Our President has outlined a vision for the social, political and economic transformation of our young people that is being rolled out through a national action plan for implementing Security Council resolution 2250 (2015), in alignment with his Big Four agenda. I would also like to point to the recently published independent progress study on youth, peace and security (see S/2018/86), which calls for broader recognition of young people as partners for peace, describing them as "the missing peace". The study also highlights the unique contribution of civil-society youth organizations, including one in Kenya whose strength lies in using young people's ability to penetrate areas that continue to be terrorist hotspots and militia strongholds in East Africa in order to reach their peers who are divided along religious and tribal lines.

Kenya welcomed the Secretary-General's 2017 report to the Security Council on women and peace and security (S/2017/861), which recognizes the crucial role of women in realizing the Sustainable Development Goals, including their primacy in preventing conflict. In 2016, with the aim of implementing all the pillars of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), Kenya launched a national action plan for 2016 to 2018, aptly entitled "To involve women is to sustain peace", which we are still implementing. The plan was built on the relevant national, regional and international instruments that address intersecting areas related to security, peacebuilding and conflict resolution, as well as ending impunity with regard to violence against women, promoting gender mainstreaming and protecting human rights.

Lastly, with regard to peace operations, Kenya is a major participant in peace support efforts both regionally and internationally. Our contribution to peace support operations in the region covers the entire peace continuum from prevention, conflict resolution and peacekeeping to peacebuilding and long-term development, including capacity-building and supporting national recovery and peacebuilding efforts. We take pride in our contribution to the process of reconstruction in Somalia, which has taken it from a State with no formal Government to one in which the people of Somalia were able to hold democratic elections in 2016. We also continue to be involved in the High-level Revitalization Forum for South Sudan for reinvigorating the peace process, which was initiated and developed in Kenya. To that end, we call on the international community to honour its obligations and provide the necessary political and financial support to both countries in the process of realizing their aspirations to develop modern, progressive States rooted in democracy.

In conclusion, we look forward to a strong outcome document and a clear reporting line that will inform the next review of the peacebuilding architecture in 2020 and also contribute to revitalizing the work of the General Assembly in supporting nationally owned sustaining peace efforts.

The Acting President: Before going further, I would once again like to appeal to all speakers to make their interventions brief and concise in order to maximize the limited time we have for today's high-level meeting. To enable everyone on the list to be heard, speakers should limit their statements in the

plenary meetings to three minutes when speaking in a national capacity and five minutes when speaking on behalf of a group.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Zaki Anwar Nusseibeh, Minister of State of the United Arab Emirates.

Mr. Nusseibeh (United Arab Emirates): The United Arab Emirates appreciates the deep dedication of the President of the General Assembly to peacebuilding and sustaining peace, and we are pleased to participate in today's high-level meeting. The United Arab Emirates supports the Assembly's forthcoming adoption of a draft resolution on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/L.49) and reaffirms its support for the Secretary-General's reform proposals aimed at enhancing the peace and security pillar of the United Nations.

In this collective multilateral and multinational endeavour, we have learned that peacebuilding is not a one-time action but a continuous effort, combining and deploying the tools of prevention, sustainable development, humanitarian assistance, peacekeeping and reconstruction in crisis-affected and conflict-riven countries, as well as post-conflict situations. An effective approach to peacebuilding and sustaining peace must be comprehensive and take into account the specific national context, regional dynamics and international drivers of today's conflicts, and must support national ownership of political, policy and institutional solutions and reforms.

For the United Arab Emirates, our approach to peace has always been long-term and multifaceted, with prevention at its core. That extends to our military involvement. The United Arab Emirates has become an active contributor to our regional security architecture. We are the only Arab nation to have participated in six international coalitions in Afghanistan, Libya, Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo and the Gulf War, as well as in the fight against Da'esh.

With regard to our obligations to reconstruction and aid provision in Yemen as a member of the Arab coalition, the coalition launched a Yemen comprehensive humanitarian operations campaign and expanded the Yemen relief programme with unprecedented humanitarian aid funding for distribution across United Nations agencies and international relief organizations. Through our extended commitment to Syrian refugees and internally displaced persons, since 2012 we have provided them with more than $861 million in emergency assistance in order to help them better integrate into their communities. Through our rebuilding of Government institutions in Iraq, we have helped to consolidate the rule of law, restore services and preserve the heritage of areas liberated from Da'esh. This includes the pledge of the United Arab Emirates to help rebuild Mosul's Great Mosque and Al-Hadba minaret, which were destroyed by Da'esh in 2017.

In all that we do to foster durable peace around the world, we remain deeply committed to political resolutions and the United Nations-led processes that underpin them, particularly in Libya, Syria and Yemen. We know that a surge in diplomacy for peace such as the Secretary-General has called for is a critical pillar of any conflict-prevention strategy. Furthermore, a key aspect of any effort to prevent conflict and build peace must be a focus on multilateral efforts aimed at ending the financing and support of extremism and terrorism. This is why the United Arab Emirates, along with its partners and allies, has taken measures to stop these countries and end the policies that have destabilized our region. And it is not just in our region that we are trying build peace. We are providing humanitarian assistance to the displaced Rohingya and are gravely concerned about their persecution.

Our peacebuilding efforts are also based on partnerships and on supporting the empowerment of the people, especially young people and women, in participation and decision-making. Our foreign policy is predicated on our country's core principles of education, inclusiveness and tolerance. To that end, we offer our experience as a progressive, modern Arab country that empowers women and young people through dedicated institutions and concrete policymaking in order to provide a unique model for developing peaceful societies that are resistant to nihilistic ideologies.

In conclusion, the key to preventing, managing and responding to conflicts will be to effectively scale existing efforts to the needs within the peacebuilding continuum. To that end, the United Arab Emirates urges United Nations agencies and Member State partners to take collective action to identify countries that support and finance terrorism and hold them accountable; consult with national and regional actors to improve policy coherence and implementation; use data to make evidence-based assessments for sustainable financing for crisis prevention and conflict-management activities and, finally, deepen global strategic partnerships as force multipliers for impact.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Tudor Ulianovschi, Minister for Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Moldova.

Mr. Ulianovschi (Republic of Moldova): The Republic of Moldova aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union (see A/72/PV.83).

I would now like to make a few remarks in my national capacity.

Just outside the United Nations building there is an iconic sculpture by the eminent Swedish artist Carl Fredrik Reuterswärd of a giant revolver with a knotted barrel and a muzzle pointed upwards. It is a powerful symbol of non-violence and peace that represents the greatest desire of humankind and the fundamental goal of the United Nations.

The Charter of the United Nations commands us to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. And yet, more than 72 years after the founding of the United Nations, the world is withering under devastating conflicts, while military might is used with such cruelty that we can hardly believe it is happening in our time or that this is the legacy that our generation is leaving humankind. Meanwhile, the United Nations has expanded greatly, becoming the largest such organization in the world, with an intricate network of bodies and regulations created for the purpose of assisting countries in avoiding conflicts, enabling their peaceful coexistence and supporting development. Yet far too often we realize that this network has grown inefficient and that we have fallen into a trap of rigid formality that drives us further and further from the original goal of the United Nations — international peace and security.

It is now time to reverse that trend and return the Organization to its original purpose — to prevent conflicts and promote peace. An effort to focus on those paramount priorities and align the internal capacity of the United Nations in order to effectively address international peace and security challenges is long overdue. We cannot afford to stay idle and live with an inefficient system at a time when some countries and regions are consumed by violent hostilities, while others are held back due to protracted conflict situations. We believe that no conflict in the world should be overlooked by the United Nations, irrespective of whether it is on the Security Council's agenda or not. The protracted conflict situation in the eastern part of the Republic of Moldova, a problem that is also exacerbated by an illegal military presence on our national territory, is one such problem. The lack of progress in settling protracted conflicts and the continuing illegal presence on others' national territories of States Members of the United Nations, as is the case in the Republic of Moldova, require more direct involvement on the part of the appropriate United Nations bodies.

The use of preventive diplomacy to pre-empt conflicts, protect States' sovereignty and integrity, strengthen security and preserve peace is a basic enabler for the application of the guiding principles of the Charter. Sustaining peace is not the sole responsibility or prerogative of one body or one institution. It is a shared responsibility of the entire international community, underpinned by respect for international law, human rights and democracy. It is also a shared interest of all nations seeking to build peace through inclusive processes. For that reason, I would like to commend the efforts of Secretary-General António Guterres to strengthen a culture of conflict prevention throughout the Organization as a concept and practice of the United Nations. We view the proposals for reforming the United Nations peace and security pillar as an ambitious step in tackling the problem of the unsustainable costs of managing crises and cutting the ties of institutional restraints and inefficiencies that prevent the Organization from taking a proactive approach to conflicts.

The ongoing challenges of the global security environment demand a comprehensive response by the United Nations, with an integrative vision in which peace, security, development and human rights are closely interlinked. In that regard, I would like to welcome draft resolution A/72/L.49, on the follow-up to the Secretary-General's report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707), to be adopted in the framework of this high-level meeting. It will be important to build on this momentum and further explore the recommendations and their implementation in a way that responds to the vision of a more effective and nimble United Nations in the area of peacebuilding and sustaining peace. Moreover, the ongoing discussions on the reform of the United Nations development system go hand in hand with the proposed restructuring of the peacebuilding and security pillars. All these initiatives are crucial, since they aim to respond to the need to strengthen the system-wide capacity to address the root

causes of conflicts and build resilience while placing prevention at its centre.

In conclusion, I would like to express the hope that this meeting will foster greater unity among Member States in supporting efforts to institutionalize a culture of prevention within the United Nations.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Pascale Baeriswyl, State Secretary of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, who will speak on behalf of the Human Rights/Conflict Prevention Caucus.

Ms. Baeriswyl (Switzerland): I am pleased to be speaking today on behalf of the members of the Human Rights/Conflict Prevention Caucus: Albania, Canada, France, Gabon, Germany, Guatemala, Japan, Mauritius, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Uruguay and my own country, Switzerland.

The Human Rights/Conflict Prevention Caucus is a cross-regional group of States Members of the United Nations that calls for using the full potential of the Organization's human rights instruments to prevent conflicts. We reaffirm our commitment to the purposes and principles set forth in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. We also recall the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and other relevant international human rights instruments. Furthermore, we affirm that all human rights are universal, indivisible, interrelated, interdependent and mutually reinforcing, and that all human rights must be treated in a fair and equal manner, on the same footing and with the same emphasis.

This year we mark the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was created in response to violent conflict in order to help to prevent such conflicts in future. In addition to embodying the international community's commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights for all individuals around the world, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the treaties that derive from it are, in the words of the Secretary-General, the best prevention tool we have. Indeed, human rights are at the heart of conflict prevention and sustaining peace. The Secretary-General reiterated that point in the Human Rights Council in February 2018 and said that making it a reality "must be our highest priority". We strongly support his statement. Human rights violations and abuses can be both the cause and consequence of violent conflicts. While the most egregious human rights violations and abuses often happen in conflict situations when civilian populations, including women and children, are particularly vulnerable, they are also an indicator of potential instability or the escalation of a conflict.

We welcome the ongoing efforts of the Secretary-General and the Secretariat to mainstream the promotion and protection of human rights in all United Nations activities. This is important for sustaining peace and for advancing sustainable development. Such United Nations human rights tools as monitoring, reporting and analysis can provide key early-warning signals and help to identify and address the root causes of conflict, discrimination and inequalities. This should prompt an effective and early United Nations response. We appreciate the persistent efforts of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and his Office aimed at highlighting situations of serious human rights violations and abuses and providing support to States in protecting, respecting and fulfilling human rights. We also believe that Member States should make full use of the interlinkages among the three pillars, as well as their mutually reinforcing nature, in order to enhance the effectiveness, efficiency and timeliness of United Nations conflict-prevention and sustaining-peace activities.

We firmly believe that the Human Rights Council can play a more important role in conflict prevention and sustaining peace, and that significant progress can be achieved within the current institutional setting and with the instruments currently available to us. We therefore call on all Member States to foster and enhance communication and exchanges between the Human Rights Council and the rest of the United Nations system, in particular the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission and their respective bodies, mechanisms and members, in order to ensure that United Nations human rights work is given optimal consideration in United Nations conflict-prevention and sustaining-peace activities. The Caucus is committed to making active use of its membership in all relevant bodies of the United Nations in order to put human rights at the heart of conflict prevention and make conflict prevention a reality.

(*spoke in French*)

I shall now make a statement in my national capacity.

For Switzerland, sustaining peace requires developing a common vision for society. When I think of the history of my own country, that shared vision has been key to ensuring a long period of peace. After a history of major religious, regional and social differences, in 1848 the Swiss people created their first federal Constitution. It lays out fundamental principles that have been developed and perfected over the intervening years, despite relapses and obstacles. Including all population groups in the development of a shared vision is a process that continues to this day and that also includes an ongoing partnership between politics, the economy and civil society, or, as Albert Einstein said,

(*spoke in English*)

> "Peace cannot be kept by force. It can only be achieved by understanding."

(*spoke in French*)

Our foreign policy is therefore logically guided by these same principles. I am pleased that the Secretary-General's report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707) anchors this principle in the United Nations system and has already been able to present the initial results of its implementation. Three elements of the report are crucial to achieving a common vision for a society — respect for fundamental rights, coherence and partnerships.

First, the best prevention is respect for the standards that we have all agreed on, such as the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international humanitarian law. Switzerland's commitment to accountability and transitional justice is part of this logic. A Swiss initiative that is close to our hearts in this context is the appeal of 13 June 2016, which called for the full use of the preventive potential of human rights instruments.

Secondly, at the multilateral level, it will be impossible to achieve sustaining peace without greater coherence within the United Nations system. The ongoing reforms will be crucial to implementing that, which is why, in these discussions, Switzerland places particular emphasis on strengthening the role of the Resident Coordinator and supports providing it with sustainable, innovative and predictable funding.

Thirdly, with regard to partnerships, the example of the Gambia shows the added value of close cooperation among all stakeholders. That country's experience shows that a peaceful political solution can be found through a joint effort at the national, regional and multilateral levels. The situation in the Gambia has demonstrated the prime importance of rapid regional mobilization in support of national conflict-prevention initiatives. The joint efforts of several stakeholders, including Switzerland, in the immediate aftermath of the peaceful resolution of the post-electoral crisis provided decisive support for the new Government's efforts to sustain peace.

The procedural draft resolution to be adopted (A/72/L.49) will guide us through the next steps for implementing the concept of sustaining peace. I can assure the Assembly of Switzerland's committed support in this debate. Too often, we are satisfied with simply managing conflicts. Today I urge us to become true champions of peace.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Baron Tariq Ahmad, Minister of State for the Commonwealth and United Nations of the United Kingdom.

Lord Ahmad (United Kingdom): The world today is experiencing greater instability and a wider range of threats to peace than we have seen in a generation. The scale of violent conflict, and the desperate human suffering it causes, is immense. If we are truly to realize the ambition of the Charter of the United Nations, which was to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, then the need for peace, and the real motivation to prevent further conflict, is as great as it has ever been. That is why the United Kingdom very much welcomes Secretary-General Guterres's vision for peacebuilding and sustaining peace, and particularly the renewed focus on conflict prevention that is set out in his report (A/72/707). We also fully endorse the idea that sustaining peace should be a shared priority across all the pillars of the whole United Nations system, from peace and security to development and human rights.

We have summarized the key elements needed to successfully sustain peace into four clear and memorable pillars, which we could term the four 4-Ds approach. The first is diversification: diversification of the tools the United Nations deploys to promote

and sustain peace. The second is development: more effective development interventions to address the drivers of conflict. The third is diplomacy: active diplomacy aimed at de-escalating crises and creating the political conditions necessary to ensure long-term peace. Finally, the fourth element is delivery: efficient delivery, in partnership with others. In that regard, the United Kingdom has identified three key priorities. The first is developing a stronger partnership for peace between the United Nations and the World Bank. Their combined vision, expertise and global presence are essential to ensuring multilateral investments in development that can tackle the drivers of conflict. The second is encouraging more preventive diplomacy within the United Nations, because we all know that political agreements are the bedrock of effective conflict prevention and peacebuilding. The third is ensuring smoother transitions to and from in-country peacekeeping missions to other United Nations entities, through earlier, better and more effective planning.

For the United Kingdom, those three priorities are underpinned by our wider commitment to a broader, values-driven protection agenda. In that context, the work of the United Nations in tackling sexual exploitation and abuse and preventing sexual violence in conflict is extremely important. Indeed, it is personally important for my Prime Minister, Mrs. May, and for me as her representative on the issue of preventing sexual violence. The United Kingdom plays a leading role in those two issues. And, of course, sustaining peace is part of the wider United Nations reform agenda, which the United Kingdom also supports. As we look to the future, we need to be more creative in finding ways to broaden the donor base for peacebuilding and to deliver more thorough solutions through the partnerships that the United Nations enjoys with a wide range of organizations. As a leading contributor to peacebuilding over many years, both politically and financially, the United Kingdom stands ready to support the processes set out in draft resolution A/72/L.49, so that together we can work effectively to sustain peace, and together we can create a world in which future generations are saved from the scourge of war.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Asim, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Maldives.

Mr. Asim (Maldives): Let me begin by expressing my delegation's appreciation to the President of the Assembly for convening this high-level meeting, which provides an important platform for building a constructive dialogue between States and various other actors in order to enhance our collective efforts for peacebuilding and sustaining peace. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Permanent Representatives of Bangladesh and Lithuania for guiding the negotiations on draft resolution A/72/L.49, on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, in an inclusive and transparent manner.

The United Nations system is the institutional expression of the international community's determination not to allow a repeat of the mayhem that characterized relations between States in the first half of the twentieth century. In establishing the United Nations, we as a global community vowed to learn from the mistakes of the past and do what is necessary to maintain international peace and security. For far too long we have viewed that as a matter of responding to conflicts. But if we are forced to respond to conflicts only after blood has been shed, we have fallen short of our responsibility. The focus should definitely be on preventing conflicts and ensuring that they do not erupt again where peace has been achieved. Preventing conflicts is not only morally right, but less costly, too.

Since joining the United Nations in 1965, the Maldives has closely followed the discourse of peacebuilding and sustaining peace. Small as we are, 52 years ago we committed to contributing whatever and however we can to the cause of peace, and we have maintained that commitment ever since. The challenges that we face today are in many ways the same, but they are also different and new. Inter-State and intra-State conflicts rage on in many parts of the world. At the same time, non-traditional threats such as environmental degradation, drought, famine and the effects of climate change are all leading to instability, undermining peace and endangering our society and our security. The case of climate change is a ready example. The Security Council has already recognized climate change as a cause of potential conflict, most recently in the Lake Chad region and in Somalia. We should therefore consider in more detail the impact of climate change on conflict and how to design responses to such challenges.

The Maldives believes that when the United Nations considers conflicts and potential conflicts it must take greater account than it does currently of the potential that such non-traditional threats have to undermine peace and security. For that to happen, we believe

that there should be greater cooperation and dialogue between the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and other subsidiary bodies, agencies and programmes of the United Nations system, in order to improve the flow of information and enable more informed decision-making. That improved coordination will help to prevent conflict and sustain peace in a more holistic manner.

Conflicts do not begin with killings. They start, for instance, with hate speech, inflammatory rhetoric and the demonization of one side by another. In order to prevent violence, we need to address those precursors to violence. We must build bridges across the religious and cultural divides that too often lead to misunderstanding and violence. We must construct counter-narratives that use truth, modernization, moderation and education to combat pseudo-ideologies that promote violence and terrorist and extremist propaganda. We must address extreme poverty, ignorance, despair and hopelessness, which are often breeding grounds for terrorist recruitment. It is essential to find holistic approaches to countering terrorism, preventing conflict and sustaining peace. That is why the link between peace and development is clearly outlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and in the Secretary-General's proposals for sustaining peace. We must bring the currently fragmented efforts together to facilitate a more holistic and efficient approach to preventing conflict and peacebuilding, and nowhere is that cooperation and approach more essential than in post-conflict situations.

In most intra-State conflicts it is the weakness of a State or State failure that facilitates conflict. The Maldives believes that the peace and security and development pillars of the United Nations should work together to build States' capacities so that they are able to maintain order, strengthen institutions and promote democratic norms. It is only when State institutions have the necessary capacity and resilience to establish a democratic order conducive to peace that stakeholders will have an incentive to choose the cause of peace, and it is only then that the people of the country will be able to enjoy peace dividends.

Peacebuilding and sustaining peace are a collective responsibility that should be shouldered by States, civil society, international organizations and, more importantly, the United Nations. The process of building and sustaining peace is a partnership. The significant progress that can be achieved through successful partnerships at the national, subregional, regional and global levels has been demonstrated at the United Nations in the context of development. Strengthening and building new partnerships in the context of sustaining peace has the potential to deliver the same results.

It is an observable fact that small States have very narrow opportunities to participate in key decision-making about peace and security in the United Nations. The Maldives will change that pattern if it is elected to the Security Council for a 2019-2020 term in the elections to be held in the Assembly on 8 June. If elected to the Council, the Maldives will prioritize preventive diplomacy. We will examine the effects of new and emerging threats on peace and security. We will ask the United Nations system to help countries strengthen their capacities to build and maintain peace, and we will advance sustainable development as an instrument for sustaining peace. To be able to do that, we must uphold the principle of equitable geographical distribution laid down in the Charter of the United Nations when we elect members of the Security Council. We need to work together. Small States and small island developing States — indeed, the entire United Nations membership — should join hands to achieve the Charter's inclusiveness and vision, and should give a chance to the Maldives to craft lasting, shared solutions for our shared destiny.

The Acting President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ildefonso Castro López, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Spain.

Mr. Castro López (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): The United Nations is, as King Felipe VI stated two years ago from this same rostrum, the universal forum for peace and progress for humankind (see A/71/PV.10). Spain would like to thank the President for his initiative of holding this high-level meeting on sustainable peace. The reforms proposed by Secretary-General Guterres and the measures proposed, in particular with regard to the Peacebuilding Commission, are an essential step towards achieving sustainable peace, and Spain fully supports them.

It is difficult to define peace. For Spain, living in peace means living without fear — without fear of exclusion, without fear that the rule of law, the law or our dignity as individuals will be violated with impunity, and without fear of the future. There are three components to sustainable peace.

First, peace is possible only if it is inclusive. Exclusion creates distrust and leads to conflict. But in many cases, being inclusive is neither easy nor clear-cut. It is our duty to support the quest for appropriate ways to promote universal participation. To take two specific groups that my country has prioritized, women and young people, the women and peace and security agenda has ensured that women are no longer seen merely as victims but as key stakeholders in preventing and resolving conflicts and in post-conflict reconstruction. The reform of the peace and security pillar is an ideal opportunity to reaffirm the centrality of that agenda, and we must do so. Furthermore, we cannot speak of a future free of conflict without involving young people, as the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth reminded us this morning (see A/72/PV.83). Spain is taking concrete steps to ensure that young people have the spaces and tools to enable them to play a positive role in prevention and mediation, the maintenance and promotion of peace and security and the fight against violent extremism.

Secondly, Spain cannot conceive of the possibility of peace without full respect for the rule of law, which guarantees the separation of powers, the primacy of the law, the principle of legality and the promotion and protection of human rights. In 2018, Spain began its term as a member of the Human Rights Council. We see our election to the Council by the General Assembly as a recognition of our country and our society's strong commitment to human, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. Peace can never be sustainable without full respect for human rights. Mass and flagrant violations of human rights are a serious threat to peace, and the international community — each of us — must assume its responsibility to protect the victims. In addition, mass violations of international humanitarian law sometimes have such profound consequences that even when peace is achieved they prevent it from being sustainable. That includes, in particular, the shocking trend of making military targets of health workers and their facilities, or schools and their students. That is why Spain is firmly committed to achieving tangible results that advance the full implementation of Security Council resolution 2286 (2016), on the protection of medical assistance during conflicts. I am also pleased to announce that Spain has expressed its intention to host the third International Conference on Safe Schools, in 2019. We call on all Member States to endorse the Safe Schools Declaration. Both initiatives are aimed at strengthening the preventive aspects of the enforcement of international humanitarian law and, ultimately, at promoting sustainable peace.

Finally, peace requires confidence in the future. It is not static. It evolves, and not always in the way we would like it to, much to our chagrin. It often mutates into new conflicts, more complex than those that came before. That is our main challenge — combining the efforts of all stakeholders in order to guarantee sustainable peace. Let us work for that goal. Spain is ready to do so.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Andrej Logar, State Secretary and Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Slovenia.

Mr. Logar (Slovenia): I would first like to thank Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, President of the General Assembly, for convening today's high-level meeting and providing us with this opportunity to discuss ways to strengthen the work of the United Nations on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. Slovenia also welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707). We commend his determination and tireless endeavours to strengthen the Organization in a more efficient, effective and impactful way. We also fully support his endeavours in conflict prevention, as well as sustainable peace, and we encourage him to continue.

Sustaining peace is the joint responsibility of Governments and societies, and should flow through all three pillars of the United Nations — peace and security, development and human rights — and through all the stages towards achieving sustainable development. For that, the United Nations must be on the ground, and must be effective and accountable. The entire Organization must be involved. When the United Nations works together across all three pillars and with the relevant partners, a meaningful difference can be made in people's lives. Respect for human rights is a precondition. Without that there can be no peace, security or development.

The role of the United Nations in prevention should be central. Slovenia fully supports the Secretary-General's efforts to bring prevention into the spotlight. Anyone who thinks that the cost of prevention is too high should remember that no cost is higher than that of human lives. In partnership and cooperation with the United Nations, Member States can play an essential role in preventive diplomacy. One way to approach prevention can be through addressing the role of water

as a factor in preventive diplomacy, especially in cross-border and cross-regional cooperation. We welcomed the recommendations of the report of the Global High-Level Panel on Water and Peace, *A Matter of Survival*, which were presented here in New York in September 2017. The global water challenge is not only about development and human rights, it is also about peace and security. It is therefore a matter of urgency to address it in an integrated and comprehensive manner at every level.

Building societies' resilience is another way to work for sustainable peace. Only a society that is resilient in the face of external and internal pressures can provide a stable and peaceful environment for its development and people. In order to help foster the resilience of societies that are fragile or are in conflict or post-conflict situations, they first need assistance that links security with humanitarian and development approaches. The process must be national and people-centred. With the aim of helping to rebuild safe environments after armed conflict, Slovenia established a humanitarian organization, the International Trust Fund Enhancing Human Security (ITF). Over the past 20 years, ITF has successfully managed more than 3,000 programmes and projects, demined almost 150 million square metres of land, cleared areas contaminated by unexploded ordnance in South-Eastern Europe, Lebanon and Azerbaijan and provided rehabilitation treatment for more than 1,000 mine survivors from the Western Balkans, the Middle East, Eastern Europe and Africa.

As soon as possible after an armed conflict ends, the international community, led by the United Nations, must step in and work to achieve a comprehensive approach to peace by including all stakeholders, as well as taking regional issues into account. We must not forget that even though the majority of conflicts are not international, their consequences can spill over. Cooperation within a region, and between the United Nations and regional or subregional organizations, is key. And special attention must also be paid to the issue of gender equality throughout the process.

Effective peacebuilding and peacekeeping must involve the entire United Nations. Mandates must be robust but still flexible enough to ensure that their focus is on protecting and assisting the civilian population, and must have the capacity to help lay a foundation for sustainable peace. That demands well-trained personnel, appropriate equipment and an exit strategy.

All efforts to achieve sustainable peace must be based on respect for human rights and the rule of law. Respect for international law is the very foundation of international peace and security, and sustained peace can be achieved only by ending impunity. The approach must be comprehensive, and reconciliation must play an important role. Slovenia has always been at the forefront of countries in advocating for the administering of international criminal justice through the International Criminal Court (ICC), which needs more support from bodies that can, should or must cooperate with it, including the Security Council. With regard to ensuring an end to impunity, we also support the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Those Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011.

Slovenia has a lot of experience in post-conflict peacekeeping, peacebuilding and sustaining peace in the Western Balkans. Irreversible stability, reconciliation and sustainable development are impossible to achieve without positive prospects for young people. In that context, Slovenia has launched a positive agenda for the youth of the Western Balkans, aiming at promoting mobility, solidarity and common understanding among young people in the region and thereby contributing to overall reconciliation and the reform efforts of the international community, especially the European Union.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne, Minister of State attached to the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France.

Mr. Lemoyne (France) (*spoke in French*): Winning a war is one thing, winning peace is another, and avoiding war is yet another. Where the last two are concerned, prevention is at the heart of the solution. That is why France welcomes today's debate on an important topic for the international community.

In the past few years there have been significant advances within the United Nations in dealing with crises and the United Nations approach to them. It has been a long time since the sole involvement of the United Nations in crises was through peacekeeping operations, even if such operations remain a strong symbol of United Nations action. We are all aware of the work of the men and women who serve as Blue

Helmets. France fully and wholeheartedly supports the Secretary-General's peacekeeping reforms, as I had the opportunity to underscore at the Security Council meeting on the subject on 28 March (see S/PV.8218).

The main conclusion is simple and widely shared and has been mentioned by many speakers today. Peace and development are intrinsically linked. Many conflicts and civil wars have their origins in the same development and governance issues that are at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The twin resolutions of 2016 (resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016)) enshrined that paradigm shift, which takes the underlying causes of conflicts into account in dealing with them and in rebuilding countries emerging from them. That was the approach taken in Côte d'Ivoire, in close cooperation with the Ivorian authorities, in order to enable an orderly withdrawal of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire and the rebuilding of the country's institutions. Côte d'Ivoire's current membership of the Security Council is an undeniable symbol of that success. If I may, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the late Bernard Tanoh-Boutchoue, the Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire, who left us so suddenly, and through him to the Permanent Representatives of our countries, who are the true linchpins of multilateralism here today.

To return to the topic at hand, more recently, the peacebuilding plan for Liberia, developed with the support of the Peacebuilding Commission, has also enabled its successful transition and the withdrawal of the United Nations Mission in Liberia. Even now, I can see in my mind's eye the images of a stadium in Monrovia, packed with people, young and not so young, full of joy and enthusiasm as power was transferred from President Sirleaf to President Weah. We could see that the stadium that had witnessed atrocities only a few years earlier was now witness to hope restored.

To guarantee lasting peace, we must ensure that no one is left behind. We must enable the most vulnerable countries to develop their own capacities so that they are able to provide concrete responses to their weaknesses by combating unemployment, particularly among young people; overcoming the lack of public services and public infrastructure; establishing inclusive governance and strong institutions; promoting a judicial system that allows everyone access to quality justice; ensuring respect for human rights and mitigating tensions over natural resources. The current situation in Syria is a clear demonstration that there can be no lasting solution to the conflict there without taking these elements into account in a settlement and without a serious commitment to an inclusive political solution.

France supports a cross-cutting and integrated approach that over time involves action on the security, humanitarian, political and development fronts, as well as in combating climate change, and that brings together all partners in a common approach, such as the one we have adopted in the Sahel, for example. Only a little earlier today, together with Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed and many of those who are here today, we talked about the joint efforts of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel and of the Alliance for the Sahel. It is exactly that approach that guides the concept of sustaining peace that the Secretary-General wants to place at the centre of his action, which we welcome and fully support. Sustaining peace is fully consistent with the Secretary-General's reforms in the areas of peace and security, the management of the United Nations and the development system. Those three reforms form a whole that we cannot consider separately. The Secretary-General can count on France's resolute support in that undertaking.

We also support the Organization's willingness to give more resources to the Peacebuilding Fund. The Fund has shown its added value and has intervened at critical moments, for example in the Central African Republic. Incidentally, France decided last year to contribute to the Fund again, after several years' absence. It is essential that through that increased strength, an objective that the Secretary-General strongly affirmed this morning (see A/72/PV.83), we can preserve the flexibility and responsiveness that are so crucial to the functioning of the Fund.

France is now taking very concrete steps to implement the concept of sustaining peace, partly through a large-scale recommitment to official development assistance (ODA), since the numbers demand it. Over the past 10 years, the ODA to conflict-affected countries has fallen by more than 10 percentage points and the ODA for financing peacebuilding in those countries has dropped by five points. We have therefore responded by increasing France's ODA commitment from 0.38 per cent to 0.55 per cent of our gross national product.

The second element in our implementation is France's development of a strategy to combat fragile

situations and respond to crises, with the aim of achieving lasting peace in fragile countries by implementing the 2030 Agenda. The strategy focuses on restoring or strengthening the social contract between the State and society. Interministerial coordination, technical assistance and cooperation and partnerships between civil society in countries of the South and research institutions, for example, are key elements in the strategy's implementation.

We have established a peace and resilience fund, funded through our financial transactions tax, and aimed at financing initiatives in regional crisis hotbeds. It is a very specific example of the use of innovative mechanisms to ensure the sustainable financing of activities for a lasting peace. In 2017 four initiatives were launched, to be supported by the fund, for the areas of Lake Chad, the Western Sahel, the Central African Republic and the Middle East, designed to help them respond to emergencies, reduce their vulnerability to crises and strengthen the resilience of their populations and institutions. The amounts allocated to the fund will be doubled by 2020. France will also work to strengthen support to the private sector in areas of vulnerability and crisis, which is essential to long-term involvement in building and sustaining peace.

As several Member States said, we are at a turning point. The term "turning point" frequently comes up in our debates. While the demand for conflict prevention and the links between peace and development have become clear, it now falls to the international community — that is, all of us here — to translate that will into action. It is one thing to make statements from the rostrum; it is another to be able to respond effectively on the ground, despite the fact that the two should be one and the same. France will therefore contribute fully to the discussions on the Secretary-General's recommendations for effectively implementing sustaining peace in a constructive spirit. We will continue to follow a resolute policy in that regard, whether on the ground or as part of our responsibilities to the United Nations.

That is the spirit in which Emmanuel Macron, President of the French Republic, took the initiative to organize a peace forum to be held in Paris on 11 November. Its objective is to learn lessons from past tragedies. That date marks a century to the very day since the end of the First World War, in which so many soldiers and civilians died in conditions that we do not want to see again but that unfortunately sometimes recur. That is unacceptable. Let us therefore reflect together on the conditions we need for a global governance based on effective multilateralism. As the Assembly knows, there is a well-known Latin proverb, *Si vis pacem, para bellum*, which means "If you want peace, prepare for war". Perhaps we should change it to "If you want peace, prepare for peace". This is not about smug pacifism but about building effective multilateralism. I know that is what we are all committed to.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Sultan bin Saad Al-Muraikhi, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Qatar.

Mr. Al-Muraikhi (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): The State of Qatar would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this meeting. We are also grateful to the Secretary-General, and we support both of them in their efforts for peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

Peacebuilding is key to Qatar's policies. We believe in peace, and we believe that it can produce results. Our region has undergone many crises and conflicts, for which we have had to pay a heavy price. However, we continue to believe in the crucial importance of the possibility of achieving peace. We have a global vision and a number of priorities, including systematic, organized efforts designed to prevent conflict, as well as other priorities aimed at promoting the peaceful resolution of conflicts. We try to support all institutions that can foster peace. In that context, we believe that education facilitates peacebuilding. Qatar has therefore helped to strengthen the education systems of a number of countries around the world, including in areas of conflict. We have enabled the provision of education services to more than 10 million children — indeed, to tens of millions, all over the world. We have tried to empower millions of young men and women everywhere, but especially in our region. We work with the United Nations to strengthen the abilities of young people and to enable them to escape the scourge of terrorism and extremism. At the same time, the State of Qatar has focused on mediation as an essential tool to prevent and resolve conflicts in a peaceful manner, and has also participated in resolving many conflicts in coordination with the United Nations. We have often underscored the importance of improving education to that end.

The State of Qatar has made great progress towards sustaining peace, while ensuring that the dignity and

rights of everyone living in our country are protected, which is why our levels of human development are some of the highest in the world, according to several global indicators.

In our view, today's crises and conflicts are the result of a failure of the rule of law and of respect for international law, as well as of violations of States' sovereignty and disregard for their choices and decisions, and of failed justice systems, corruption and marginalization. In order to achieve peace, therefore, we must reject all policies that threaten and violate the sovereignty of States. We must avoid creating fabricated crises and work to avoid such policies, since otherwise it will continue to be very difficult to achieve peace, especially in the Middle East, which is dealing with an increasing number of crises and conflicts. Peace cannot be achieved without cooperation and adherence to international law on the part of all of us.

In the context of supporting the efforts for the preparation of this meeting, the State of Qatar hosted the regional consultations on sustaining peace held in Doha in January, attended by the President of the General Assembly and with the participation of States, United Nations organs and regional and non-governmental organizations. The outcome of the consultations emphasized that sustainable peace is best achieved by addressing the root causes of conflicts. In that regard, the State of Qatar renews its support to the Secretary-General's efforts and initatives in the area of achieving peace through preventive diplomacy.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Terens Nikolaos Quick, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece.

Mr. Quick (Greece): Before I became a politician, I was a journalist. I remember that on one side was a pile of resolutions and decisions of the United Nations and on the other, a pile of war and tensions. Nothing has changed since then.

On behalf of the Hellenic Republic, I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this important meeting. It comes at a pivotal moment in time, when the sustainability of the rules-based global system is being continually threatened by a number of violent and protracted conflicts, as is evident in Syria, Iraq, Yemen and the Democratic Republic of Congo, and so forth — the pile I just mentioned. Those conflicts, driven by an array of overlapping factors — such as socioeconomic inequalities, the political and economic dominance of political or religious groups, conflict over natural resources and their distribution, unemployment and, very important, human rights violations — have immediate effects and severe long-term repercussions, not only for millions of forcibly displaced people but also for the host countries in their vicinity, undermining the rule of law and putting their economic and social cohesion to a serious test.

Against that backdrop, the concept of peacebuilding and sustaining peace offers the necessary tools and practical guidance for preventing all stages of armed conflict. Equally important, it can help to build the necessary consensus between the United Nations and its Member States for major reforms. As a member of the European Union (EU), Greece therefore aligns itself with the common EU position and welcomes the commitment to building and sustaining peace, as expressed in the Secretary-General's report (see A/72/707). In addition, in my national capacity, I would like to make the following four points regarding sustaining peace, particularly its implementation strategy.

First, prevention, together with an integrated approach to conflict and crisis management, should become our main tool. That means that we need to improve the ability of the United Nations to prevent conflicts from breaking out in the first place by addressing their underlying causes, and subsequently to deal with every stage from early action to stabilization, as well as ensuring its capacity to remain on the ground long enough for peace to take root rather than withdrawing after a few weeks or months.

Secondly, prevention also requires Member States to assume leadership and ensure that the United Nations system is given the trust and the operational, political and financial support that it needs. As a trusted stakeholder, the United Nations system, through a vertical and cross-cutting process, must develop the necessary strategic synergies with local, national and regional actors and deliver specific, country-focused strategies based on joint analysis, intelligence and the effective sharing of plans.

Thirdly, world peace is the business of everyone, even those who are not in this Hall today. It therefore cannot be achieved without parallel progress in the humanitarian actions of the United Nations and, most of all, without improvement in the records of Member States on issues such as democratic governance and the rule of law. In order to achieve sustaining peace, we need

to ensure that human rights and fundamental freedoms are respected and fully protected. Furthermore, Member States must give special emphasis to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, so as to mitigate or eliminate over time factors such as poverty and economic exclusion, which give rise to conflict.

Last but not least, Greece considers that peacebuilding and sustaining peace is also about the substantive inclusion of women and young people in the process, both as members of United Nations missions and as civil-society activists. In the same context, we also advocate a policy of zero tolerance for violence and harassment for United Nations staff, especially where local populations of women and young people are concerned.

Besides conducting activities originated in the United Nations such as this high-level meeting, it is crucial to ensure that in conflict-sensitive areas such as ours — the eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East — all regional actors embrace the importance of sustaining peace, reflecting the principles of our rules-based global system and refraining from violating their obligations under international law. Today I have heard many words about peace and seen tears shed when speakers talked about peace. But now is the time for those words and tears to give way to action, and to put into practice what is being expressed in words today. It is in that spirit that, from an idea conceived by my Foreign Minister, Mr. Nikos Kotzias, for the past two years Greece has been the initiator and host of the Rhodes Conference for Security and Stability, an informal ministerial meeting of countries of the wider eastern Mediterranean aimed at fostering stability and security in the region by promoting a positive agenda and mutual trust and understanding between participants. This year, the third Rhodes Conference, with the theme of "The spirit of Rhodes: shaping a positive agenda for stability and security", will take place on 21 and 22 June.

I want to conclude with two words that are very important tools for all of us working for peace. The first is "dialogue", which is diplomacy's main tool for pursuing peace. The second is "democracy", which is crucial to the maintenance of peace all over the world. As Greeks, we have the right to fight for them, because both dialogue and democracy are Greek words. Let us not forget that.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Andrejs Pildegovičs, State Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Latvia.

Mr. Pildegovičs (Latvia): I would like to thank Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, the President of the General Assembly, for convening this high-level meeting on such a vital and pressing issue. We also commend the efforts of Lithuania and Bangladesh as co-facilitators of the intergovernmental consultations leading to the finalization of draft resolution A/72/L.49, to be adopted later by the Assembly.

Latvia aligns itself with the statement delivered previously on behalf of the European Union (see A/72/PV.83), and I would like to highlight a few points in my national capacity.

Significant efforts have been made and are under way to develop a more efficient and streamlined United Nations. Latvia welcomes the vision of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, and his focus on preventing conflicts before they arise by addressing the root causes of discontent and aggression. Conflict prevention is an effective tool for protecting those who need it most. Investing in prevention is a smart thing to do.

In order to ensure sustainable peace, we must include the protection and promotion of human rights in all aspects of peacebuilding, and the international community must make sure that the work of sustaining peace and development is conducted in full respect for international law and human rights.

Support for good governance, strong democratic institutions, the rule of law and inclusive economic development have always been priority areas for Latvia in its contribution to the implementation of sustainable development and sustaining peace, through projects ranging from water and waste management to e-governance and green technologies, connectivity and border control.

Women are disproportionately affected by conflict and should play a key role in achieving lasting peace. In that regard, I would like to highlight the long-standing commitment of the Latvian Government and Latvian non-governmental organizations to promoting women's empowerment by supporting other countries in their efforts to broaden economic opportunities for women and girls by ensuring access to education, preventing early marriage and reducing the risk of social exclusion

and radicalization. Education is vital to addressing security challenges, tackling the risk of radicalization among young people and building resilient societies.

Latvia supports efforts to modernize the public sector of European Neighbourhood Policy nations and of countries in Central Asia and the Western Balkans by educating present and future public-service and civil-society leaders and sharing our experience in e-governance, civil-service reform, local governance and the fight against corruption.

While the United Nations plays a central role in coordinating and focusing efforts on conflict prevention and sustaining peace, regional mechanisms are essential to delivering sustainable development and preventing violent conflict in individual States. Latvian civilian experts are part of the European Union Monitoring Mission in Georgia and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, monitoring the fulfilment of peace agreements and facilitating peace and security in the conflict zones. Latvia is committed to assisting Georgia and Ukraine in recovering sustainably from the impact of their ongoing conflicts and building lasting peace.

As a member of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, Latvia stands with the Government and the people of Iraq in their fight against international terrorism. We continue to train Iraqi security forces and are ready to provide expertise and financial support for reconstruction projects.

United Nations peacekeeping missions are useful political tools for preventing the escalation of existing conflicts and thereby laying the ground for sustaining peace. Latvia has taken part in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali since 2016 and has gradually increased its involvement as a practical contribution to peace and security.

All States Members of the United Nations are the guardians of this international system and of the Charter of the United Nations. Member States of the Security Council have a particular privilege and responsibility. With veto power also comes the responsibility to use that power in the interests of universal peace and security. Regrettably, when discussing the crisis in Syria, the Council has not always lived up to that special responsibility and has therefore hampered peacebuilding. More needs to be done. We need new, tailored strategies for sustaining peace. It is high time to pay more attention to prevention, peacebuilding and sustaining peace. Latvia fully supports the steps taken by the Secretary-General in that direction, and we see today's meeting as an important element in support of that change.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Sergiy Kyslytsya, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine.

Mr. Kyslytsya (Ukraine): Ukraine aligns itself with the statement delivered previously on behalf of the European Union (see A/72/PV.83), and I would like to add the following remarks in my national capacity.

Ukraine appreciates the initiative of the President of the General Assembly in holding this meeting. We believe that this is the right time for Member States and the United Nations leadership to consider measures that can result in real change in the United Nations peacebuilding architecture. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for presenting his views in the report (A/72/707), which we found very practical and forward-looking. We therefore support him in the work of implementing his proposed recommendations, particularly those aimed at strengthening the capacities of peacekeeping operations for sustaining peace, as well as those ensuring the broader involvement of women in peacebuilding activities. We are also encouraged by the Secretary-General's vision for reform of the peace and security pillar, based on the concept of the prevention of conflict. Preventive diplomacy is a major tool that the United Nations should deploy more often, drawing on the good offices of the Secretary-General and his mandated responsibility to draw the Security Council's attention to situations that could threaten international peace and security.

Our deliberations are taking place at a defining moment for the Organization. Despite the universal appeals for peace and our declared commitment to uphold it, wars and armed conflict remain a recurring feature of international affairs today. In regard to the prevention of conflicts and gross violations of human rights, the speed and determination of the United Nations are crucial. In Rwanda in 1994, the United Nations failed to react quickly in order to prevent genocide. In 2014, neither the leadership of the United Nations nor the members of the Security Council were able to stop Russia's military aggression and occupation of Crimea and Donbas.

However, despite all the justified criticism of the functioning of the United Nations, there is currently no alternative to it where safeguarding international peace and security is concerned. In recent years, the Organization has had some positive results. Its contribution to the cause of peace in Colombia and the success of its peacekeeping operation in Liberia should be carefully studied and the relevant best practices applied in other parts of the world. But the list of issues where our Organization could have put its huge potential to better use for peace is very long, and still includes the clear-cut security challenges that were the very reason for its emergence in the first place.

In Syria, a series of tragic events that includes the flagrant use of chemical weapons has been unfolding before our eyes. The individuals responsible for those actions have not been brought to justice, and Russia is still the only country on the Security Council that prefers to protect both the Al-Assad regime and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant from accountability. While Russia was busy with that, Al-Assad knew he could act with impunity, and he did. Syria has continued to use chemical weapons against its own people. It has not declared or destroyed all of its chemical weapons, despite its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention. The threats posed by the chemical attacks in Syria and the United Kingdom represent a very serious challenge to the Organization itself as well as to the non-proliferation regime.

Impunity breeds only impunity. While shielding Russia's client Al-Assad for the past eight years, including by using the veto in the Security Council 12 times, Putin has also gone as far as launching an attack on Ukraine and attempting to annex part of our territory in the most blatant violation of the Charter of the United Nations ever seen. The world has been witness to behaviour on the part of the Russian regime, whether in Ukraine, Georgia, Syria, the United Kingdom or elsewhere, that is unprecedented since the Second World War. It is a collection of aggressive attempts to rule the world without following civilized rules. That horrible chain of crimes must be eliminated. So far, impunity appears to be a decisive obstacle to the Organization's ability to address challenges to international peace and security. It is clear that long-overdue reforms must be implemented if it is to uphold its once unquestionable trustworthiness and restore its ability to take prompt preventive action.

Ever since the United Nations peacebuilding architecture was first established, it has been acknowledged that peacebuilding activities are intended to prevent armed conflicts rather than being limited to post-conflict assistance alone. We must look at peacebuilding more broadly and promote it with greater determination. We must take measures to discourage fragmented approaches. The Secretary-General's proposals in that regard are well in line with such an approach. Enabling countries to put in place effective and inclusive national and local mechanisms and institutions that can address the socioeconomic and political root causes and drivers of violent conflict must become a priority for the United Nations system, especially in the areas of promoting and protecting human rights and advocating a prominent role for women in all stages of peace consolidation.

Peacekeeping operations remain one of the most reliable and commonly used instruments in the Organization's toolbox for curbing conflicts and ensuring sustaining peace. While it is clear that much remains to be done if we are to bring United Nations peacekeeping up to speed and ensure that it can cope with the complexity of contemporary challenges, there are situations where there is no possibility of implementing political solutions to conflicts without the engagement of peacekeeping operations. For more than four years, the situation in and around my country has been an example of the non-utilization of the potential of United Nations peacekeeping. We stand ready to engage constructively at all levels to stop Russia's military aggression, establish lasting peace and restore Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. A peacekeeping operation under the auspices of the United Nations could be a decisive factor in that process, and we are devoutly hoping for further progress to be made on this crucial matter. While discussions in relevant forums on this issue are still under way, the Organization should be prepared to play its proper role in a future international mission in Ukraine.

In conclusion, after a lengthy debate in this Hall, it is clear that prevention must be at the core of sustaining peace activity. I would nevertheless like to ask some simple but legitimate questions. What has the United Nations done to prevent Russia from flouting the rule of law on a global as well as a regional level? And, more importantly, what exactly do we, as an international

community, have to do in order to learn these sad lessons and improve the prospects of future generations?

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Mrs. Teresa Ribeiro, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Portugal.

Mrs. Ribeiro (Portugal): I would like to start by thanking President Miroslav Lajčák for convening this high-level meeting of the General Assembly on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, providing us with an excellent opportunity to share best practices, discuss common challenges and reaffirm our commitment to building and sustaining peace in a comprehensive and holistic manner.

We are living in challenging and complex times. New forms of contemporary threats, most of them transnational, are increasingly threatening our stability and our pursuit of peace, development and prosperity. Climate change, food insecurity, water scarcity, pandemics, terrorism, organized crime, cyberattacks and multiple forms of illicit trafficking — in human beings, human organs, weapons, narcotics and cultural goods — are only some of the challenges we are facing. Today more than ever, multilateralism is essential if we are to address the old and new threats to peace and security. History has shown us that we cannot fight them alone.

As we all know, ceasefires, peace agreements and elections do not necessarily imply that a sustainable peace has been finally achieved. Sustainable peace requires the international community's continued and unwavering attention. Post-conflict situations are times of great uncertainty and vulnerability, and transitions to peaceful political settlements are fragile moments when spoilers act and mobilize. There can be no question that successful peacebuilding and sustaining peace processes must be nationally owned. However, there have been several examples of failure when incipient democratic structures have been left to fend for themselves in the wake of political arrangements that are enforced rather than agreed on among the relevant stakeholders. Sustaining peace therefore requires increased international political vigilance and engagement. Peacebuilding is a long-term joint effort. We all know that peace can be achieved only if the root causes of conflicts, including underdevelopment and inequalities, are appropriately and comprehensively addressed.

Portugal fully aligns itself with the principles of conflict prevention, early warning, the primacy of politics, the resurgence of diplomacy and gender balance, as advocated by the Secretary-General. In order to deal with out complex contemporary challenges, we welcome and support his proposals for reform of the management, peace and security, and development strands of the United Nations system.

Portugal currently participates in seven United Nations peacekeeping missions and is committed to increasing its participation in future, as well as to working further on enhancing missions' interoperability. Whenever possible, peacekeeping operations should have a realistic and feasible exit strategy that should be implemented in parallel with the initial actions of the Peacebuilding Commission, the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Fund. That common endeavour will require more synergy and cooperation between peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

The international community must also take into account social mechanisms and informal institutions and networks at the local level, where women, elders and young people can play an important role in enhancing their societies' resilience and supporting healing and reconciliation processes.

Regional arrangements also have an important role in sustaining peace. Here I would like to briefly mention resolution 71/324, adopted in September 2017, on cooperation between the United Nations and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, including in areas of critical importance for tackling the root causes of conflicts. We firmly believe that this resolution will strengthen the relationship, cooperation and complementarity between the two organizations in their pursuit of common values and in sustaining peace.

Peacebuilding is not State-building. However, although distinct from one another, they are unavoidably interlinked efforts. In that context, Portugal welcomes the latest report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding (S/2018/43), which clearly identifies concrete actions for increasing, restructuring and better prioritizing the funding dedicated to United Nations peacebuilding activities. Predictable and sustainable funding is crucial to the success of the United Nations.

We look to the Security Council, which has the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, to further enhance its mechanisms for preventing conflicts. We call for strengthening its

existing cooperation and dialogue with the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the rest of the United Nations system, including the Peacebuilding Commission, in order to improve our collective capacity to prevent conflicts and sustain peace.

In conclusion, we must stay together and cooperate closely if we are to break the cycle of conflicts. We must endeavour to prevent the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of violence. Our actions must always be guided by strict respect for the Charter of the United Nations, human rights and international law. We must recognize that development, peace and security, and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing. Only a universal organization such as the United Nations is in a position to adequately respond to that challenge and call for action. Portugal stands ready to be part of that effort and to cooperate with the whole system in fulfilling that noble objective.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Yuri Sterk, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria.

Mr. Sterk (Bulgaria): Let me start by stating that Bulgaria fully aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier on behalf of the European Union and its member States (see A/72/PV.83).

I would now like to add the following points in my national capacity.

With the adoption in 2016 of its resolution 70/262, on the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, the General Assembly recognized that the Organization should look at the whole cycle of a conflict rather than waiting until taking action is urgent. In that regard, Bulgaria welcomes the Secretary-General's approach, which places prevention and sustaining peace at the heart of his reform proposals and is aimed at making the United Nations peace and security pillar more coherent and effective.

For its part, Bulgaria is putting its shoulder to the wheel of the reforms by continuing to support United Nations prevention and mediation capacities. I am pleased to announce that my country has decided to make another contribution to the United Nations Mediation Trust Fund, which this time will be earmarked for United Nations activities in the Western Balkans. In that context, I would like to highlight that Bulgaria actively supports the irreversibility of the reforms that have been undertaken in the Western Balkans, which — together with the European perspective of the countries in the region and improved regional connectivity — are key drivers for lasting peace, stability and prosperity.

Bulgaria believes that the sustainability of peace requires an integrated approach, which can be implemented through stronger linkages between United Nations efforts in the areas of peace, development, human rights and humanitarian action. My country is a contributor to the operationalization of the humanitarian-development and peace-development nexuses. We have also continued to give financial support to United Nations humanitarian activities in Iraq, Afghanistan and other countries.

With regard to the follow-up process established by draft resolution A/72/L.49, which we are about to adopt, we hope that in the forthcoming deliberations on recommendations and options for financing contained in the Secretary-General's report (A/72/707), the General Assembly will maintain a comprehensive approach and will discuss all aspects of sustaining peace rather than one particular set of proposals.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that Bulgaria will continue to contribute to further strengthening the peacebuilding architecture, prevention capacities and sustaining peace activities of the United Nations.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Fernando Simas Magalhães, Under-Secretary for Multilateral Political Affairs, Europe and North America, of Brazil.

Mr. Simas Magalhães (Brazil): I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, for the opportunity to address the General Assembly at this high-level meeting. This is an occasion for following up on General Assembly resolution 70/262, on the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, and for continuing our discussion on peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

I would like to affirm Brazil's long-standing support to the peacebuilding efforts of the Organization. We were an active participant in the negotiations that created the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) in 2005, and we were among the original members of the PBC Organizational Committee, elected in 2006. Brazil has also been the Chair of the country-specific configuration for Guinea-Bissau since its beginning in 2007. We will continue to help the people of Guinea-

Bissau in their peacebuilding efforts, including the preparations needed to ensure that the elections are held in accordance with the agreed calendar.

I would also like to welcome the efforts of the Secretary-General in drafting his report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707). The comments and options that it presents deserve to be discussed in depth. The procedural draft resolution (A/72/L.49) to be adopted at this meeting will help us to move in that direction.

I would like to reiterate Brazil's long-standing support for the primacy of politics, conflict prevention and non-military approaches to the United Nations engagements in the field of peace and security. Those elements are crucial to achieving the goal of embracing a more comprehensive approach to peacebuilding at every stage of a conflict, including prevention, peacekeeping and post-conflict recovery. We therefore favour considering the three pillars of the United Nations as intrinsically linked and mutually reinforcing. At the same time, we also want to emphasize that in implementing sustaining peace we should not merge those pillars or mix the mandates of the existing United Nations bodies and entities, but rather focus on how to make the existing mandates work more efficiently.

The Secretary-General's report also established a relation between sustaining peace and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It has been said on more than one occasion in this Hall that development is the best defence against the possibility of conflicts breaking out, and that is perfectly true. Nevertheless, we should point out that some of the recommendations in the report, especially those related to policy coherence and the role of the resident coordinators in prevention and in helping to implement the Sustainable Development Goals, tend to concentrate only on the role of developing countries. Brazil believes that it is essential to avoid making false correlations between poverty and conflict. Conflict prevention is not a task for the developing world alone, as the current tensions in various parts of the world clearly demonstrate. We should not forget that 72 years ago the Organization was created in the aftermath of a destructive conflict between what were the world's most developed countries at the time.

In conclusion, the concept of sustaining peace is a new one, and this high-level meeting will help us discuss how to better understand it and put it into practice. But implementing it is not just a task for the United Nations and its Member States. To do that, we have to bring together a variety of strategic partners. We must reinforce our cooperation with regional and subregional organizations, financial institutions, the private sector and non-governmental organizations. Only through the joint efforts of all of those actors will we be able to achieve our common goal of a peaceful world.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Katerina Sequensova, Junior Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs for Security and Multilateral Issues of the Czech Republic.

Ms. Sequensova (Czech Republic): The Czech Republic aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/72/PV.83). I would also like to highlight a few elements in my national capacity.

The Czech Republic welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707), issued pursuant to the twin resolutions — General Assembly resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016) — on the review of the peacebuilding architecture. We share and support the report's vision of forging common systems and capabilities across the United Nations aimed at consistently and adequately supporting Member States in their endeavours to sustain peace and build resilient and prosperous nations, and in line with their commitments to leave no one behind. We also support the notion of putting sustained peace at the very centre of the United Nations activities across all three of its pillars, since we are all well aware that where there is no development or human rights, there can also be no peace, and where there is no peace, there can be no development or human rights. We greatly appreciate the commitment of the Secretary-General and that of the President of the General Assembly to conflict prevention. We commend the goal of facilitating better conflict prevention through balanced reforms of the peace and security pillar, development system and management of the United Nations.

United Nations assistance to Member States should be based on three elements — reinforcing national ownership of the processes involved, developing country-contextual responses and ensuring the effective delivery of results on the ground. Fostering cooperation with international, regional, subregional and national partners is crucial to positive results. Innovative partnerships with international and regional

financial institutions can provide additional support, including new sources of financing. We also recognize and support the direct relationship between gender equality and conflict prevention. If we are to achieve the goals of peacebuilding and sustaining peace, we must robustly endorse women's full participation. The Czech Republic, as a long-term donor to the Peacebuilding Fund and a member of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission, will continue to actively support United Nations efforts to reach the objectives of the sustained-peace concept.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Halebonoe Setsabi, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Relations of Lesotho.

Mr. Setsabi (Lesotho): Allow me to begin by commending the President for convening this historic high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. It is our hope that this critical process of the review of the peace and security architecture, as called for in resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016), will garner the necessary support for a meaningful and sustainable outcome.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Foreign Minister of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM) (see A/72/PV.83), and reaffirms Lesotho's commitment to promoting the peaceful settlement of disputes, in accordance with Article 2 and Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations. We echo the view emphasized by NAM that the tools at the disposal of the United Nations system should be used in good faith and not for interfering in the internal affairs of Member States.

Today the world is facing myriad complex security challenges that have the potential to erode the achievements of the United Nations, particularly in the area of international peace and security. Given the complexity of the conflicts in the world today, we urge for closer cooperation among the United Nations and regional and subregional bodies at both the strategic and operational levels.

The Kingdom of Lesotho can testify to the fact that closer cooperation among the United Nations and regional and subregional bodies has contributed to successfully addressing the challenges of insecurity and instability. Since we last reported on the political and security situation in Lesotho, we are pleased to be able to inform the Assembly that the political and security situation in our country has improved. The Kingdom of Lesotho remains relatively peaceful and stable, which can be attributed to closer cooperation between the United Nations, the African Union and the Southern African Development Community, the relevant subregional organization. The Government of Lesotho recently approved a road map for national reforms, including security-sector reform, developed in consultation with all national stakeholders and with technical assistance from the United Nations Development Programme. It is our fervent hope that when the reforms are fully implemented, our Kingdom can enjoy sustainable peace and stability.

The State has primary responsibility for peacebuilding and sustaining peace. However, the involvement of other national stakeholders, including women and young people, is key. Sadly, in conflict situations, it is women and young people who bear the brunt of violence and exploitation, and we therefore call for their increased participation in peace processes, since it is critical not only to attaining and sustaining peace but also to achieving sustainable economic development. We also call for the involvement of other partners, such as regional and civil-society organizations and international financial institutions, so that they can share their insights and expertise in the areas of peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

Past experiences and current field operations show that more resources are being spent on responding to the outbreak of conflicts than on preventing them. That is clearly unsustainable. We therefore call for more resources to be directed towards helping Member States to build structures and systems that can sustain peace and aid development in order to prevent any escalation of conflicts in the first place. The lack of progress on reforming the Security Council will continue to be an obstacle to improving the peace and security architecture of the United Nations, whatever form that may take and whatever its intentions. We therefore reaffirm our call for Security Council reform. We look forward to having a Council that is more representative, democratic and responsive to imminent conflicts.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to acknowledge the role that the United Nations, regional and subregional bodies continue to play in working tirelessly to bring peace to conflict situations across the globe.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Gitesh Sarma, Secretary in the Ministry for External Affairs of India.

Mr. Sarma (India): I thank the President for arranging today's discussion on a high-priority issue.

Building peace and prosperity for all remains a major objective for the international community, and the United Nations has a significant role to play in helping countries achieve those goals collectively in our mutual interest. The Organization was itself born in the aftermath of a conflict on a global scale. The discourse on peace has therefore remained high on its agenda, and our understanding of why conflicts continue to persist around the world has also increased over time. While peacekeeping, the flagship activity of the United Nations, has been largely successful in containing inter-State conflict situations, its limitations in tackling chronic intra-State situations of armed conflict, despite large-scale deployments of troops and other resources, are obvious. The concept of peacebuilding, which has expanded the focus to post-conflict situations and led a decade or so ago to the establishment of a United Nations peacebuilding architecture, is struggling, owing to a lack of adequate funding that in turn betrays a lack of genuine political will.

The concept has evolved further with the adoption of the General Assembly and Security Council's landmark 2016 resolutions on sustaining peace (70/262 and 2282 (2016)). Sustaining peace requires a comprehensive understanding of the related challenges and the creation of opportunities through serious international efforts to ensure greater peace and prosperity. That is also in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We welcome the Secretary-General's report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707), which makes several useful suggestions on how to enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations system in supporting Member State-led efforts, strengthen partnerships with relevant stakeholders and ensure predictable and sustainable funding for peacebuilding activities through the Peacebuilding Fund. We also welcome draft resolution A/72/L.49, to be adopted by the General Assembly on that issue, as it will demonstrate our collective commitment to moving forward in the direction of that important objective.

Concrete action on this issue will require a much greater commitment to making a much deeper and longer-term political engagement and investment, including financial contributions to activities that help to build and sustain peace. As is well known, the funds available for United Nations peacebuilding efforts do not amount to even 1 per cent of the annual budget for United Nations peacekeeping. In that context, we welcome the specific financing options presented by the Secretary-General in his report. They must be examined seriously in order to address the current funding levels, which continue to be very inadequate.

The importance of empowering women and young people and ensuring their participation in conflict resolution, peacebuilding and governance for sustaining peace is also becoming better understood. Increasing the institutional involvement of women in peacekeeping, conflict prevention and mediation and political processes is particularly important, and requires capacity- and institution-building at the ground level. In that context, the example of the multifaceted professionalism of the first-ever all-women formed police unit in the United Nations Mission in Liberia, which served as a role model in inspiring Liberian women to increase their own contribution, has been well recognized. We are proud that India deployed the unit as long ago as 2007. Similar examples would go a long way towards helping communities build and sustain peace.

In an interconnected global world, peace and security among nations are interlinked and can be ensured only through long-term, equitable sustainable development. That requires the spirit of the genuine global partnership reflected in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 17 for an increasingly representative and equitable global governance system. For its part, India continues to expand its development partnership efforts with fellow developing countries in order to assist them in their sustainable development priorities. Last year we established an India-United Nations development partnership fund to further strengthen such efforts. Another recent example of building partnerships for achieving the SDGs and action on climate is the International Solar Alliance, which has already brought more than 60 countries together and seeks to make affordable clean energy available to millions, helping to create jobs and achieve better living standards.

The concept of sustaining peace requires the engagement of all the pillars of the United Nations. We appreciate the Secretary-General's focus on strengthening operational and policy coherence and improving capacity across the United Nations

system. We hope that the ongoing deliberations on the comprehensive reform proposals that he has put forward will help the system deliver better on the peacebuilding and sustaining peace agenda. We look forward to working with all partners and playing a constructive role in pursuing the objective of achieving peace and prosperity for our peoples.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.